

Mr Michel Barnier
Head of Task Force for Relations with the United
Kingdom
European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
B-1040 Brussels

By email

AD/BR1047703/RMA

Brussels, 30 January 2020

Keeping road transport moving between the EU and the UK after Brexit

Dear Mr. Barnier,

IRU and ESC are asking the European Commission and EU27 Member States to prioritise commercial land transport market access (road and combined freight transport as well as road passenger transport by coach – occasional and regular services) in the forthcoming negotiations with the UK on the future relationship. Any deal applying to trade and tourism would have little effect without parallel market access arrangements.

IRU represents commercial road freight and passenger transport operators worldwide. ESC represents the European shippers. Both organisations have members in the UK and EU.

Land transport, including road freight and combined transport, is fundamental to international trade for almost all goods moving between the EU and the UK. The overland route through the UK is the most efficient for road freight transport to connect with the Republic of Ireland. In addition, more than one million people are crossing the Channel by coach every year, with the vast majority of the routes operated by EU27 established operators. Bus and coach are also regularly-used mobility means between the Republic of Ireland and the UK. It will be essential to keep goods moving and passengers travelling hassle-free whenever the transition period ends.

To work efficiently after the end of the transition period, EU27 and UK commercial road transport companies will need clear, practical and reciprocal rules around the operation of international transport. For road freight, this should cover accompanied and unaccompanied operations. For passenger transport, basic connectivity supporting mutual provisions on the right to enter and short stay in the territories of the EU and the UK should be assured. IRU and ESC recommend that these rules be agreed early in the negotiation process. Failure to address the needs of commercial road and combined transport effectively will result in significant disruption across major parts of both the EU and UK economies.

IRU and ESC propose that a Land Transport chapter is included in any future EU-UK relationship agreement. This chapter should permit:

- the mutual recognition of EU and UK licences, certificates and qualifications;

- the facilitation of quota-free international road freight, passenger and combined transport at least to, from and through the two contracting parties of the agreement;
- level playing conditions for EU and UK established commercial road freight and passenger transport companies;
- a continuous smooth connection between the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the European Union.

Every possible opportunity should be used to introduce innovative digital solutions to reduce the administrative burden for the commercial road transport industry and shippers as well as for the EU Member State governments.

IRU and ESC are prepared to assist in developing viable solutions and to meet with your competent services to further discuss options as well as the detailed technical aspects of the issues raised in this letter and on other issues related to road freight, passenger and combined transport which may be relevant in the upcoming negotiations. In case you or your competent services require additional information or have any questions pertaining to the above-stated, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Let us work together to assure the continuity of the mobility of people and goods in the post Brexit EU-UK framework. Please be informed that we also addressed these issues with the UK government.

We look forward to hearing your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Raluca Marian
General Delegate
IRU Permanent Delegation to the EU



Godfried Smit
Secretary General
European Shippers' Council (ESC)

